



MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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Testimony on behalf of the Michigan Association of Counties:

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I'd like to thank you for allowing me some time today to speak with you regarding the MAC's position on a few transportation issues. Each year the Michigan Association of Counties holds a legislative conference in the spring and fall to determine our platform issues. We take recommendations from our membership, vote on amendments, and make a final recommendation to our Board of Directors. Our transportation platform addresses several issues at the federal, state, and local level. We've picked out a few important transportation-related issues for this legislative session that we'd like to discuss with you.

Economic Development

Roads and infrastructure are critical components for economic development and an increased quality of life. MAC supports the logical development and interconnection of road systems and opposes the development of a patchwork system of local roads through its counties.

- *We would like to see MDOT coordinate with agencies such as the Michigan Economic Development Corp. and Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that projects with the highest possible return on investment for the surrounding communities are properly funded.*

Regional Transportation

The ability to connect transportation systems between counties would greatly improve the mobility of residents and broaden their access to employment options. An effective and efficient regional transportation network benefits a broader base and allows for the costs to be shared across several counties; this has the ability to free up capital for reinvestment and growth.

- *We would like to work with the legislature to ensure that all barriers to regional transportation are removed; allow counties the ability to collaborate on effective and efficient transportation networks.*

County Airports

The state of aeronautical infrastructure in Michigan is currently at a critical tipping point. There has been no funding increase for aviation in over 80 years! County Airports serve as a vital piece of infrastructure in their communities. Increasing funding for these valuable assets as well as the

state's overall aviation network could boost jobs and economic output in many communities that are struggling with unemployment numbers still well above the state average.

- *MAC urges the Bureau of Aeronautics to adequately fund the growing need of Michigan air service.*
- *MAC supports an increase in State funds to continue to match federal funding and to leverage as many federal dollars as possible in ALL categories.*

Road Funding

The current state of transportation funding in Michigan is not sustainable into the future. We must find a way to increase investment in our state's transportation infrastructure. We have to find an innovative way to bring Michigan's transportation funding into the next century.

- *MAC supports finding a long-term solution to the current transportation funding conundrum. However, MAC would oppose any proposals which may require an increased burden on property taxes to fund roads.*

Railway Issues

- MAC supports the development of policy to work with short line rail lines to avoid abandonment of rail freight lines. If rails prove to be unsustainable, we continue to encourage rails-to-trails as a solution to quality of life concerns and encourage communities to cooperate in forming an integrated trail system. MAC encourages the State to fund preservation of rail corridors.
- MAC supports the federal, state, and local partnership pertaining to the high-speed rail corridor including routes from but not limited to Chicago to Detroit with connecting routes to Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Flint, Lansing and Saginaw. A comprehensive plan should be implemented to be paid by the users of the service.
- If there is a high speed rail network built to connect the Midwest and East coast, Michigan cannot afford to be left out! This critical infrastructure project will not only create jobs but it can also be used as an economic development tool to assist Michigan companies in exporting their goods nationally and internationally. Logistically businesses in Michigan could stand to see some economic benefit from having access to a high-speed rail network.

Closing Statement:

At the county level we stand prepared to work with the administration, legislature, and our local municipalities on government reform. For too long now we have been in idle with regards to transportation and infrastructure investment, and we continue to fall further behind. We **MUST** find a solution to this problem that benefits all Michiganders if we plan to make this state more attractive to the rest of the world. Continuing a policy of disinvestment in our infrastructure will only stack the deck against Michigan's chances at success competing in the global economy.